

SBA Syracuse District Office Signed Statement of Support with ESGR



From left: Front row, SBA Region II Administrator Michael J. Pappas, ESGR New York State Committee Chairman Major General Thomas W. Sabo, USA, Ret., Bernard J. Paprocki, SBA Syracuse District Director. Back row: ESGR Central New York Region Chairman Major General Paul A. Schempp, USAF, Ret., 174th Fighter Wing Commander Colonel Kevin W. Bradley, New York ANG

SYRACUSE- The U.S. Small Business Administration Regional Administrator for New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, Michael J. Pappas, and Syracuse District Director, Bernard J. Paprocki, signed a Statement of Support for the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) with ESGR New York State Committee Chairman, Major General Thomas W. Sabo, USA, Ret. on July 2, 2008. The signing ceremony occurred at the 174th Fighter Wing Headquarters Conference Room on Hancock Field in Syracuse, New York at 10:00 am.

The Statement of Support confirms that the SBA Syracuse District Office joins other employers in pledging that:

- We fully recognize, honor and enforce the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-Employment Rights Act (USERRA).
- Our managers and supervisors will have the tools they need to effectively manage those employees who serve in the Guard and Reserve.
- We will continually recognize and support our country's service members and their families in peace, in crises and in war.

The Syracuse District Office is the first SBA district office to sign a statement of support for the ESGR, and leads the way for other SBA district offices across the nation, in addition to their many veterans programs and services, to show their support in a meaningful way for the men and women of the Guard and Reserve. SBA Syracuse District Veterans Business Development representatives and private sector Syracuse employers who partner with ESGR also attended the event.

"I am proud of the Syracuse District Office for their efforts in creating partnerships with organizations like the ESGR that help us further reach the military community. As the Forth of July draws near, we are reminded of the men and women who have sacrificed so much for this country. We cannot thank them enough. However, I hope we can help turn their small business dreams into a reality with programs like the Patriot Express Loan Initiative," commented Michael J. Pappas, SBA regional administrator for New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The SBA has a mission to help small businesses start, grow and succeed. The SBA recognizes that the military community plays a vital role in the country's small business engine, and actively seeks to meet the needs of these unique entrepreneurs with counseling, training, financing, contracting assistance and economic injury disaster recovery.

"We stand ready and able to help the small businesses that employ Reservists and National Guard members called to duty, as well as the small businesses owned by Reservists and National Guard members. I am very proud to demonstrate our support for the military community by signing this Statement of Support for the Guard and Reserve," said Bernard J. Paprocki, SBA Syracuse district director.

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) is a Department of Defense agency established in 1972. The mission of ESGR is to gain and maintain employer support for Guard and Reserve service by recognizing outstanding support, increasing awareness of the law, and resolving conflicts through mediation. ESGR volunteers provide free education, consultation, and if necessary mediation for employers of Guard and Reserve employees.

"The SBA Syracuse District Office joins a cadre of Fortune 500 companies, state and federal agencies and thousands of America's employers in demonstrating support for our armed forces," added ESGR New York State Committee Chairman, Major General Thomas W. Sabo. "By signing the Statement of Support, Mr. Pappas and Mr. Paprocki are sending a clear message to the employees of SBA's Syracuse District that while they are serving their country they do not have to worry about their civilian jobs."

As the 1.3 million members of the National Guard and Reserve continue to perform an increasing number of unique missions that require extraordinary actions on the part of everyday citizens, ESGR will continue to be the informational agency for the employers of citizen warriors. More information about ESGR Employer Outreach Programs and volunteer opportunities is available at www.esgr.mil.

SBA is committed to serving the military community. In the last two years alone, the SBA Syracuse District Office helped finance 171 veteran-owned small businesses in 34 counties across upstate New York. Over 2,700 received entrepreneurial counseling and training during that same time from SBA resource partners SCORE, Small Business Development Centers, and Women's Business Centers. Small business owners can receive expert business planning assistance to help their business successfully work through any potential disruption that may result from a call to active duty of owners or key employees. Since October 1, 2007, 216 reservists and guard members received free and confidential counseling and training.

SBA's newest loan program Patriot Express is specifically designed to help the extended military community achieve their entrepreneurial dreams. Reservists and Guard members are among those eligible for the loan program which features SBA's lowest interest rates for business loans, which range from 2.25 to 4.75 percent over prime, SBA's guaranty of 75-85% depending on the size of the loan, and the fastest turnaround time for loan approvals. The Syracuse District Office has guaranteed over \$2.9 million in Patriot Express loans to 26 veterans since the program launched in June 2007. More information on the Patriot Express loan program is available at <http://www.sba.gov/patriotexpress/index.html>.

Another loan program that is designed for Reservists is the Military Reservist Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program (MREIDL). Loans of up to \$1.5 million are available for small businesses sustaining economic injury because an owner or essential employee has been called up to active duty as a military reservist. The maximum loan interest rate is 4%. Since the program's inception, over 300 loans worth \$27 million have helped small businesses across the nation survive the call to duty of reservists. Fourteen loans worth almost \$1 million have helped small businesses right here in New York State. More information on the MREIDL Program is available at <http://www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance/militaryreservistsloans/index.html>.